

## Article - Public Utilities

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§17–605.

(a) The Office shall:

(1) assist the Commission by providing independent evaluation and recommendations regarding opportunities to:

(i) preserve the Commission's reputation; and

(ii) improve the effectiveness, productivity, or efficiency of Commission programs, policies, practices, and operations;

(2) ensure public accountability by preventing, investigating, and reporting instances of fraud, waste, and abuse of Commission property or funds;

(3) examine, evaluate, and report on the adequacy and effectiveness of the systems of internal controls and their related accounting, financial, technology, and operational policies;

(4) report noncompliance with and propose ways to improve employee compliance with applicable law, policy, and ethical standards of conduct;

(5) conduct audits as required under § 25–405 of this article; and

(6) conduct other audits related to the operation of the Commission.

(b) In developing recommendations, the Office may:

(1) conduct administrative investigations, budgetary analyses, and financial, management, or performance audits and similar reviews;

(2) provide management advisories; and

(3) utilize the assistance from any other government agency or private party to complete a project initiated by the Office.

(c) When applicable, the inspector general shall comply with generally accepted government auditing standards.

(d) (1) Except as provided in paragraph (2) of this subsection, the inspector general shall submit written reports to the Commission for publication on the Commission's website.

(2) The inspector general:

(i) may not disclose any record, report, or related information that is protected from disclosure under the Public Information Act;

(ii) may provide an oral report if appropriate under generally accepted government auditing standards; and

(iii) shall establish and follow procedures for safeguarding the identity of confidential sources and protecting privileged and confidential information.

(3) The Commission shall publish with any report submitted by the inspector general any official written comments or responses offered by the Commission's management.

(4) The inspector general shall also submit to the Commission for publication on the Commission's website periodic reports that summarize the activities, findings, recommendations, and accomplishments of the Office.

(e) If reasonable grounds exist to believe that a serious violation of federal, State, or local law or Commission regulations has occurred, the inspector general shall report the allegation to:

(1) an appropriate law enforcement agency;

(2) the State Ethics Commission;

(3) the Commission Board of Ethics; or

(4) any other agency with jurisdiction to enforce the law.

(f) The Commission shall adopt regulations to ensure that the Office operates independently from the management of the Commission.

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